

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DACCA 00404 200220Z
ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7819
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMCONSUL SYDNEY

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 0404

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PDIP BG (AUSTRALIA) US
SUBJECT: BRIGADIER NURUZZAMAN TO BE ASSIGNED TO SYDNEY

REF: STATE 84287

1. BRIGADIER A.N.M. NURUZZAMAN IS, AT LAST, TO BE RESTORED TO BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT EMPLOY AND WILL BE ASSIGNED TO SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA, EITHER AS TRADE REPRESENTATIVE OR AS CONSUL GENERAL. HE IS EXPECTED TO LEAVE THE RESIDENCE OF HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW, HUMAYUN KABIR, BANGLADESHI MINISTER-COUNSELOR IN WASHINGTON, TOWARD THE END OF FEBRUARY. IT WAS IMPLIED BY KABIR, WHO IS HERE ON LEAVE, IN CONVERSATION WITH CHARGE AND POLCOUNSELOR JANUARY 18, THAT NURUZZAMAN WOULD GO DIRECT FROM WASHINGTON TO SYDNEY.

2. LATER SAME EVENING AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION CONFIRMED TO POLCOUNSELOR THAT AUSTRALIA HAD AGREED TO APPOINTMENT, ALTHOUGH TITLE AND STATUS OF OFFICE HAD NOT BEEN SETTLED. HIGH COMMISSIONER WAS UNAWARE OF NURUZZAMAN'S BACKGROUND.

3. FOR CANBERRA AND SYDNEY: NURUZZAMAN WAS AMONG THE FIELD GRADE LEVEL PAKISTANI ARMY OFFICERS WHO JOINED FREEDOM
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FIGHTERS DURING BANGLADESH'S 1971 STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE. IN FEBRUARY, 1972, THOSE FREEDOM FIGHTERS WHO WERE NOT REGULAR ARMY PERSONNEL AND WHO CHOSE TO DO SO WERE PERMITTED TO JOIN NEWLY FORMED JATIYO RAKKHI BAHINI (NATIONAL DEFENSE ARMY). MAJOR NURUZZAMAN WAS NAMED TO COMMAND THE JRB AND PROMOTED TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL. IN OCTOBER, 1973, HE WAS PROMOTED TO COLONEL AND TO BRIGADIER IN EARLY 1975.

4. THE JRB WAS (PROPERLY) CONSIDERED A PARAMILITARY GROUP DEDICATED MORE TO THE PERSON OF BANGLADESH PRIME MINISTER/PRESIDENT SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN THAN TO THE CONSTITUTION AND THE STATE AS CONTINUING INSTITUTIONS. NURUZZAMAN THUS WAS CLOSE TO THE PRESIDENT AND CONSIDERED ONE OF HIS PRINCIPAL HENCHMEN. EITHER THROUGH GOOD FORTUNE OR SOME PREMONITION NURUZZAMAN LEFT BANGLADESH FOR THE UNITED STATES WITH HIS WIFE "ON OFFICIAL DUTY" ON AUGUST 11, 1975; 75 DACCA 3938 REPORTED THAT HE WAS GOING ON A "ONE-MONTH STUDY TOUR" FOLLOWED BY TEN DAYS LEAVE. ON AUGUST 15, MUJIB WAS ASSASSINATED AND HIS GOVERNMENT DISMANTLED WITH MANY OF HIS ASSOCIATES BEING JAILED.

5. THE EMBASSY'S RECORD OF HIS TRAVEL FROM BANGLADESH TO THE UNITED STATES IS INCOMPLETE AND PERHAPS THE DEPARTMENT CAN FROM ITS FILES ADD TO THIS. IT IS RECALLED BY SOME THERE THAT HE LINGERED IN INDIA FOR SOME TIME BEFORE UTILIZING HIS VISA. SO FAR AS THE EMBASSY IS AWARE HE HAS BEEN IN THE UNITED STATES LIVING WITH HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW AS LEAST SINCE THE SUMMER OF 1976. TWO EMBASSY OFFICERS (THE CHARGE AND THE POLCOUNSELOR) WHO HAVE MET HIM SOCIALLY AT THE KABIR RESIDENCE HAVE FOUND HIM A SOFT-SPOKEN MAN WHO, WHILE LAMENTING THE KILLING OF HIS FORMER CHIEF, APPEARED TO HAVE A DESIRE TO SERVE THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN WHATEVER CAPACITY IT WISHED FOR HIM. THE DEPARTMENT CAN COMMENT MORE FULLY
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ON HIS PRESENT VIEWS AND ON HIS STATUS IN WASHINGTON WITH REGARD TO THE BANGLADESH EMBASSY THERE.

6. IN MENTIONING NURUZZAMAN'S IMPENDING ASSIGNMENT TO TWO EMBASSY OFFICERS, THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF FORCES INTELLIGENCE COMMENTED THAT IT WAS ABOUT TIME NURUZZAMAN DID SOME WORK TO EARN THE FUNDS WHICH WERE PROVIDED FOR HIS UPKEEP.

7. WE SEE HIS REHABILITATION AS PART OF PRESIDENT ZIA'S POLICY TO BRING BACK INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF BANGLADESHI AFFAIRS AS MANY OF THE PERSONS FROM THE PAST WHO ARE WILLING TO WORK WITH HIM IN HIS PROGRAMS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY.
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